

Even as China and Russia have grown more belligerent, the President sees no need to reverse the harmful damage of the defense cuts he has insisted upon. He sees no need to rebuild our conventional and nuclear forces.

He sees no need to accept that leaving behind residual forces in Iraq and Afghanistan represents an effective means by which to preserve the strategic gains we have made over the years, through tremendous sacrifice.

The President has always assumed the role of Commander in Chief with great reluctance. That is particularly true of his dealings with Iran. For years, Iran has continued to enrich uranium. For years, Iran has refused to come clean to the IAEA. But ending Iran's nuclear weapons program has never fit neatly between the administration's policy bookends.

The President believed he could extend a hand of friendship and bring the Supreme Leader to the table. Even though that approach failed, the President now seems determined to conclude an agreement with Iran that would leave it with a threshold nuclear capability. It is an agreement that could allow Iran to retain thousands of centrifuges, master the nuclear fuel cycle, advance ballistic missile research and testing, and keep secret any possible military dimensions of nuclear development that have already occurred.

The administration has pursued these negotiations not as part of an overall strategy to end Iran's nuclear program, but as a stand-alone matter of litigation where a settlement must be reached. This negotiation should not be about getting the best deal that the Iranians will agree to, it should be about the strategic objective of ending Iran's nuclear weapons program. To do this, the administration must be committed to using force if negotiations fail.

The strategic ambiguity of leaving "all options on the table" has never been convincing, and the administration refused to work with Congress on developing a sanctions and declaratory military response should negotiations fail. It is unlikely that this Congress could be convinced to lift sanctions absent a complete disclosure on the part of the Iranians of all previous research conducted in pursuit of a nuclear device.

And this gets back to the differences between the perspective of the Israeli government concerning Iran's nuclear capability and those of the Obama administration.

Iran is pursuing full spectrum warfighting capabilities to wage war against Israel, the United States, and our Sunni allies in the region.

Iran is developing cyber capabilities to harass and harm its adversaries, ballistic missile capabilities, and conventional capabilities to deny United States warships access to the Persian Gulf.

Iran remains a state sponsor of terrorism.

Tehran also continues to push ever deeper into Iraq.

In its fight within Iraq, Iran's proxy Shia militias have gained valuable combat experience on the ground to add to the terrorist tactics of employing IEDs that were perfected against United States forces. The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq not only led to the abandonment of the Sunni tribes which had allied with us in Anbar Province, it led to a greater reliance upon the Iranians by the Baghdad government.

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Qods Force are expanding their command and control and combat capabilities in Iraq and Syria and gaining valuable warfighting lessons.

The Qods force and Hezbollah are mastering an expeditionary fighting capability that should concern Israel, the United States, and our Sunni allies. The Iranians are natural allies of the Houthi militias in Yemen.

Setting aside the nuclear program, from a perspective of strategy, the Iranians are advancing across the region in all other aspects of warfighting. All of this has occurred while sanctions have been in place and the price of oil has declined.

From the perspective of any Israeli Prime Minister, Iran's advances have occurred while the terrorist presence in the Sinai has grown, the Nusra front and ISIL are present in Syria, and Libya has become a terrorist training ground.

Because the administration has all but conceded the Iranian nuclear enrichment capability, Israel has grown more isolated. It has come to understand that it may have to act alone. Yet rather than ending Iran's nuclear weapons program, President Obama's objective seems to be to defer any decision about the use of force to one of his successors. That may be politically expedient, but it is inconsistent with the national security requirements of Israel.

I say all this to underline the importance of the Prime Minister's address this morning.

We have seen the results of a politics-above-all foreign policy now for several years: It leaves our Nation strategically weaker, and will make challenges faced by the President's successor all the more difficult.

Israel has seen this too. Israel knows it may well be the first to suffer if the Obama White House makes another flawed political decision, but Americans should understand it is not just Israel that needs to worry. We should be concerned by a nuclear Iran. The whole world should be concerned by a nuclear Iran, and the Prime Minister is going to help explain why that is. For Israel's sake and ours, I for one am very glad he is.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today marks the 115th day since President Obama announced he was nominating Loretta Lynch to be Attorney General of the United States. That makes her the longest pending Attorney General nominee in more than four decades.

The Senate Judiciary Committee reported her nomination favorably last week. So what is the wait? Why can't we get this woman approved? It appears we are not going to this week.

She has a spotless record and credentials that are above reproach. There is absolutely no reason she should have to wait any longer for confirmation. Our Nation needs an Attorney General. Each day that passes without Ms. Lynch's nomination being confirmed is yet another testimony to Republicans' inability to govern.

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last December, rightfully, the National Labor Relations Board voted to make important changes to union election procedures. Their rule changes are good for workers and businesses. They modernize the election process and help prevent delays and frivolous litigation.

I am sure there are some businesses that oppose this, but I haven't found them. This is simply a problem that has been engendered by the Republicans in the Senate. They are trying to roll back these reforms instead of supporting the rights of workers. The reforms they made are so basic, such as using email and using other processes such as a fax machine and using the employers' records, not the unions' records.

Later this afternoon the Senate will consider a Republican-introduced resolution of disapproval which seeks to undo the NLRB's rules changes. This is yet another sad reminder of how little regard Republicans have for the American worker.

Last year we saw Republicans vote against an increase in the minimum wage, as well as legislation that would ensure American women get the same pay for doing the same work as men. Republicans in Congress I don't think get it.

We are in this building, in this Chamber, to help the American people and want to work to make sure businesses are prosperous, but we also can't lose sight of the fact that workers are what makes the businesses profitable.

So if you are for American workers and the families they support, then prove it with your vote on this resolution.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.